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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News (MEDNEWS)  
#97-02  
09 January 1997

This service distributes news and information to  
Sailors and Marines, their families, civilian  
employees, and retired Navy and Marine Corps families.  
Further dissemination of this e-mail is encouraged.

Headlines this week include:

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It Can Help

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Headline: New Policy For Contact Lens Wearers Set  
Washington, DC--Beginning immediately, if you're a  
naval aviator or SEAL, and your commanding officer says you  
need contact lenses instead of glasses on the job, the Navy  
will pay for them.

In the past, most Navy personnel who needed to wear  
contact lenses to enhance their effectiveness on the job  
paid for the lenses themselves. But beginning 1 January  
1997, contact lenses and solutions are being provided to  
Navy and Marine Corps pilots, flight officers and air crew  
as well as special warfare personnel (i.e., SEALs) whose job  
requires they wear contact lenses.

The new policy is implemented by CNO message 042158Z  
December 1996.

"The member's commanding officer is the 'gatekeeper' on  
who in their unit should be authorized contacts," said LCDR  
Ann Bobeck, MSC, health care analyst at the Bureau of  
Medicine and Surgery (BUMED). "He or she will be the one

who will determine whether or not it's operationally necessary."

According to Bobeck, some of the reasons it's "mission essential" for aviators and SEALs to wear contact lenses is that their jobs often require them to wear night vision devices, protective eye equipment, diving masks, and other devices, all of which preclude wearing glasses. Eligibility for contact lenses must be documented in writing by the member's commanding officer to the supporting military treatment facility (MTF). Contact lenses fitting and follow-up care will be provided by ophthalmology or optometry clinics in the MTF.

Marine Corps aviators and air crew members have been authorized contact lenses since 1992. For them, the only change will be that they will now be supported by Navy MTFs for procurement of lenses.

The submarine contact lenses program will not be affected by this policy change.

Additional guidance on implementing the contact lenses program is available in BUMED message 111510Z December 1996. By Jan Davis, BUMED

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Headline: Dental Clinic Takes Big Bite Into Readiness

Norfolk, VA--The Sailors of USS ROOSEVELT's battle group have ready teeth, and they've got the statistics to prove it.

When the carrier's battle group deployed recently, 97 percent of the group's Sailors were "dental ready."

"What that means is all but a very tiny percent of the Sailors in that entire battle group were class one or two," said CDR E. Wayne Quesenberry, MSC, director for administration at Naval Dental Center (NDC) Norfolk, VA.

In terms of dental care, patients with a class one status have no dental needs; class two means they have only minimal needs and aren't expected to have any dental problems during the next six months.

A 97 percent readiness level is exceptionally high. Dental's goal when a battle group deploys is to have 85 percent of the Sailors dental ready.

Quesenberry credits much of this high level of readiness with exceptional teamwork between the Independent Duty Corpsmen (IDC) who sought out Sailors who might need dental care, and the Blue, Gold and A teams at NDC, who treated patients. Four ships in the battle group accomplished 100 percent dental readiness, thanks to the hard work and resourcefulness of IDC HM1 Gary Menduz (USS HAYLER), HM1 Michael Murphy (USS HAWES), HMC Richard Flannery (USS ATLANTA), and HMCS Craig Carson (USS MONTPELIER).

For those patients who had trouble getting to the clinic for care, the teams manned mobile dental units (MDU), fully equipped dental vans that drive to the pier to treat patients. More than 800 examinations in preparation for the

battle group's deployment were done at MDUs, which allowed Sailors to spend 1,858 more hours at work rather than traveling to or waiting for appointments.  
By CDR E. Wayne Quesenberry, MSC, NDC Norfolk and Jan Davis,  
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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Headline: Inpatient Cost Share Goes Up For Family Members

The daily amount active duty family members pay for inpatient care in civilian hospitals under TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra increased from \$9.70 to \$9.90 as of 1 October 1996.

An active duty family member who is admitted to a civilian hospital for care (except mental health care) under TRICARE Standard or TRICARE Extra will pay the daily rate of \$9.90 for the number of days spent in the hospital--or a flat fee of \$25, whichever is greater. The flat \$25 cost-sharing rate also applies to ambulatory (same-day) surgery.

This rate doesn't apply to any other category of TRICARE-eligible patients, only to active duty family members. Inpatient care for other categories of TRICARE beneficiaries will in most cases be cost-shared under the diagnosis related group (DRG) payment system for TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra.

Inpatient mental health care at civilian facilities has a \$20 per day cost-share for active duty family members under TRICARE Standard, TRICARE Extra or TRICARE Prime. This rate applies to admissions to any hospital for mental-health services, any residential treatment facility, any substance use disorder rehabilitation facility and any partial hospitalization program providing mental health or substance use disorder rehabilitation services.

The daily inpatient mental-health rate for other (non-active duty family member) eligible patients is \$40 per day under TRICARE Prime. Under TRICARE Extra, the cost-share is 20 percent of institutional and professional charges. Under TRICARE Standard, the mental health care/substance use disorder treatment cost-share will be the lesser of a specific daily rate (\$137 in FY97) or 25 percent of institutional and professional charges.

Courtesy TRICARE Support Office

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Headline: Recycling Is Good Medicine For Environment and Pocketbook

Norfolk, VA--About 30 environmental and facilities managers from medical and dental treatment facilities throughout the world met recently in Norfolk, VA to talk about saving the environment and money.

The one day gathering was held in connection with the annual Department of the Navy's environmental program manager's meeting.

The primary focus of the gathering was to share successes in pollution prevention at medical and dental

facilities. "A pollution prevention solution found to be successful at one activity can often be applied with similar success to other activities," said Bill Rogers, the Bureau of Surgery and Medicine's (BUMED) environmental program manager.

One of the most successful solutions is National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) Bethesda's award-winning recycling program, which netted more than \$500,000 that can be used on morale, welfare and recreation projects and new recycling technologies.

Some of the anti-pollution, money-generating ideas that came out of the gathering include:

- the recovery of medical chemicals, such as xylene, formalin, and alcohol, by using distillation equipment
- replacement of X-ray processors with dry chemical photo processing equipment
- use of high temperature water soluble surgical drapes, gowns, towels and assorted cloth and plastic items
- recycling of glass, plastic, paper and cardboard
- replacement of ethylene oxide sterilizers with less toxic alternatives.

To encourage commands to implement new programs, the Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) in Norfolk, VA, has set aside funds to assist commands.

"We've got seed money to get medical and dental commands started on anti-pollution projects," said LT Mark Russell, CEC, environmental engineer for NEHC. "You don't have to be one of the big hospitals or dental clinics to apply for money. The small projects are important, too."

Funding information is available by calling LT Russell at (757) 363-5558, DSN 864-5558.

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Headline: Reservists Participate In Community Health Fair  
Whidbey Island, WA--Naval Reserve Medical Dental Unit 0189 (NR MDU 0189) at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, WA, recently participated in a joint operation to provide the nearby community of Point Roberts with preventive health care information.

NR MDU 0189, the U.S. Army Reserve's 158th Aviation Regiment 6th Battalion, and local civic leaders from the community, planned the health fair, which provided them training in medical logistics.

"This is the biggest training exercise that I've planned in my entire career," said HMC Susan Borget, who helped organize the fair.

The medical team set up shop at the fire station offering various clinics on women's health issues, blood pressure and ophthalmology. It was especially appreciated by the small community, which has no local medical support.

According to LCDR Robert Zaneski, executive officer of the medical unit, the exercise went well but the main purpose was to assist the community.

By JO2 Ralph Radford, Naval Air Reserve, Whidbey Island

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Headline: Gitmo Celebrates Its 5,000th Birth Day

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba--U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH)  
Guantanamo Bay recently celebrated the birth of its 5,000th baby.

Jennifer Plaza, daughter of Marine Corps SGT Marcos and Elda Plaza, was delivered on 6 December 1996 by Dr. Nancy Petit.

Jennifer and her family were honored in a ceremony at the hospital by Base Commander CAPT Jim Cannon, Commanding Officer of the Marine Corps Barracks COL Reno Bamford and Naval Hospital Commanding Officer CAPT Faye Scott, NC. Jennifer received gifts from the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society and Marine Barracks Spouses Club, including a stork-shaped plaque.

At the ceremony, Bamford complimented his Marines on their initiative to ensure that the 5,000th baby belonged to a Marine.

Babies have been being born at USNH Guantanamo Bay since it was dedicated on 24 September 1956.

By CAPT Bruce K Bohnker, MC, USNH Guantanamo Bay

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Headline: Great Lakes Students Remember Those In Need

Great Lakes, IL--Students at Naval Hospital Corps School (NHCS) Great Lakes, IL put their money where their hearts were by helping out their fellow man.

Lead by SR Anthony Armstrong and SR Jason Christly, a class at the school passed a hat and collected nearly \$550, which was presented to the chaplains at Naval Hospital Great Lakes, who, in turn, used the money for families in need.

Armstrong and Christly's interest in helping those less fortunate was sparked when they saw a homeless man trying to get a drink of water at a restaurant. They treated him to dinner, and then continued their humanitarian efforts at their school.

By HMC James Kite, NHCS Great Lakes, IL

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Headline: Covey Chosen for Coveted Military Medicine Award

Bremerton, WA--CDR Dana C. Covey, MC, 45, head of orthopedic surgery at Naval Hospital (NH) Bremerton, has been chosen to receive the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Award for excellence in military medicine for the Navy.

"I'm humbled to be selected for this honor, but it really reflects the team efforts of my shipmates and the support of my command," said Covey.

The prestigious award was established in 1993 through the Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Armed Forces Foundation to recognize active duty physicians, Lieutenant through Commander, who demonstrate exceptional scholarship, research, practice, leadership, and potential to provide the

leadership for armed forces medical departments.

Each recipient receives a \$50,000 research grant and a plaque from the Fisher Foundation.

Covey is donating his grant to the study of blast wounds to the spine and extremities.

Covey's career in the Navy began at the Naval Academy in 1973. He served as a Line officer for seven years before attending medical school. As a Medical Corps officer, he has served in the Middle East, aboard ship, and at NH Philadelphia and NH Bremerton. He has also served on temporary duty at numerous locations, including Croatia.

By Judith A. Robertson, NH Bremerton

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#### Headline: File Taxes The Easy Way--Electronically

With the beginning of the New Year, many people made resolutions to improve their lives. But not all resolutions are easy. Here's one resolution that is guaranteed to make your life easier and better this year--file your federal taxes electronically.

Let's face it, filing your tax forms is not an event that most people look forward to. But military personnel, retirees and family members don't have to face tax time alone. Local Electronic Income Tax Filing (ELF) Offices will prepare tax forms and file them electronically at absolutely no cost.

"One of the biggest advantages of using the ELF office is ... it's free," said SN Jason McKinley, Naval Legal Services Office National Capital in Washington, DC. According to McKinley, the cost savings can be considerable, especially if the office prepares a long tax form. When compared to the cost of a commercial service, military personnel can save \$100 or more.

Another advantage of filing electronically is the quickness and convenience of the return.

"You can have your return in as little as nine days," said McKinley, "and it can be automatically be deposited into your bank account."

ELF, which has the full endorsement of the Chief of Naval Operations, is a significant benefit available to all rates and ranks. Make your resolution today to visit your Naval Legal Services Office for fast and easy tax filing.

By LT Edie Rosenthal, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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#### Headline: TRICARE Question and Answer

Question: I'm a TRICARE Prime enrollee. Recently, my civilian Primary Care Manager (PCM) ordered blood tests and an X-ray to completed at another location. Do I have to pay the copay at each location I get a test?

Answer: Except for maternity care and enhanced benefits authorized for TRICARE Prime enrollees, a copayment is required for each civilian outpatient visit.

Services rendered by a provider on a single date of

service are considered a single treatment encounter subject to a single copayment. However, when an enrollee receives tests ordered as a result of an outpatient visit at a separate laboratory or radiology clinic, an additional copayment may be required.

For more information, contact your local TRICARE Service Office.

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#### Headline: Healthwatch: Feeling Pooped? Sleeping On It Can Help

Fatigue is one of the most frequent complaints that people take to their doctors.

Sometimes, feeling exhausted can have a deep-rooted medical cause; other times, it can be only a matter of going to bed earlier to catch a little more sleep.

According to Dr. Stephen R. Yarnell, a fellow at the American College of Cardiology, here are the leading causes of tiredness he sees in his practice:

- Going to bed too late. It may seem obvious, but it's an often overlooked cause. Recent research indicated that more than 60 percent of Americans don't get enough sleep.

- Spouse has sleep problem. Try sleeping apart, or help your partner solve the problems that are keeping him or her awake.

- Excess weight.

- Lack of regular exercise.

- Caffeine. Even a small amount can keep some people from sleeping well.

- Smoking. The carbon monoxide in cigarettes deprives the body of oxygen; coughing and nicotine withdrawal can wake you at night.

- Shallow breathing. Keep your shoulders back and expand your abdomen when you breathe.

- Stressed-out friends. Their mere company can exhaust you mentally, physically and spiritually.

- Boredom. Too little stress can be as exhausting as too much.

- Medications. Check with your pharmacist about prescription and non-prescription medications you may be taking.

- Emotions. Anger, worry, and hurry can exhaust you, yet also keep you from sleeping well.

- Sleep disorders. A doctor or sleep disorders specialist can assist you in finding out if this is a cause.

- High blood pressure. Have it checked regularly.

- The Blues. Exercise can often relieve mild depression; see your doctor if that doesn't help.

- Seasonal Affective Disorder. Find a way to get more light to your eyes during the winter months.

- Medical disorders. Heart disease, prostate and urinary problems, diabetes, anemia, mononucleosis, chronic fatigue syndrome can all rob you of sleep.

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Feedback and comments are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact Jan Davis, MEDNEWS editor, at e-mail address [mednews@bms200.med.navy.mil](mailto:mednews@bms200.med.navy.mil), telephone 202/762-3223 (DSN 762-3223), or fax 202/762-3224.